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Pearl Harbor All Over Again

Adm. Roscoe Hillenkoetter, director of the Central Intelligence Agency, was summoned before the Senate appropriations committee for questioning concerning statements that his outfit of sleuths and spies had been caught by surprise by the North Korean invasion.

The admiral said it wasn't so. He contended that CIA had known for a year that North Korea was strong enough to invade, but said that the agency could not predict a timetable.

The report of the director could have been more reassuring, for it developed that Izvestia, the official newspaper of the Soviet government, and the Communist party of North Korea had given 15 days' ad-

How It vance notice of their intentions.

Happens On June 10 Izvestia outlined the plans of the North Korean Communists to hold general elections throughout North and South Korea between August 5 and 8 in order to put all of Korea under a single parliament by August 15, the fifth anniversary of the country's liberation from Japan.

When this was written, the Communists were in control only of North Korea and it was obvious that they could not put such plans into effect without taking South Korea by force in the interim. Here was the tipoff on the invasion, offered to anyone who bothered to read Stalin's official newspaper.

But even more disconcerting was Adm. Hillenkoetter's statement to the senators that, while the CIA is charged with gathering information, it is not the function of the agency to evaluate the information or to make predictions about intentions. It may be asked what use intelligence is if no one undertakes to appraise the information gathered and seeks to determine coming hostile actions?

This is almost precisely the situation that prevailed when Pearl Harbor was attacked and the Roosevelt administration, with a wealth of information at its disposal reflecting Japanese intentions, professed to have been taken by surprise.

We had broken the Japanese secret code months before the attack and were reading, so to speak, over the shoulders of the leaders of the Japanese government; yet, when the question was later asked why the information had not been put to better use, the man who then was chief of Army intelligence said that evaluation was not considered as important as the concealment of a "military secret of incalculable value."

Thus the code breaking advantage was not employed to put American forces on the alert against indicated hostile dispositions and moves. The leading idea of all concerned was to hide from the Japanese the knowledge that we had cracked their code.

Almost nine years later, American intelligence operations are found to be as disorganized as when Pearl Harbor was caught with its planes down. If it isn't the duty of Hillenkoetter's outfit to evaluate intelligence information, whose duty is it? Without evaluation, intelligence is precisely as useful as a man without a head.

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26 June 1950

PA183

KOREA-INTELLIGENCE

WASHINGTON--AMERICAN MILITARY AND DIPLOMATIC OFFICIALS WERE REPORTED TODAY TO HAVE BEEN ALERTED WELL IN ADVANCE THAT COMMUNIST FORCES WERE MASSING TANKS AND TROOPS AGAINST THE SOUTH KOREA BORDER.

REAR ADMIRAL ROSCOE HILLENKOETTER, CHIEF OF THE U.S. CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY, WAS REPORTED TO HAVE TOLD SENATORS THAT HE HAD SUPPLIED SUCH REPORTS TO THE MILITARY AND THE STATE DEPARTMENT AS LATE AS JUNE 9.

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PA186

WASHINGTON--ADD KOREA-INTELLIGENCE (183)

HILLENKOETTER CAME BEFORE THE SENATE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE TO EXPLAIN WHY, IT WAS, AS SOME SENATORS CLAIMED, THAT THE UNITED STATES WAS "CAUGHT FLAT-FOOTED" BY THE KOREAN COMMUNIST ATTACK.

HILLENKOETTER WAS REPORTED TO HAVE SAID THE CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY SUPPLIED REPORTS OF THE TROOP AND TANK CONCENTRATIONS--BUT DID NOT EVALUATE THESE REPORTS.

THIS IS THE STORY OF HILLENKOETTER'S TESTIMONY AS IT WAS PIECED TOGETHER LATER FROM CONFIDENTIAL SOURCES:

AS LONG AS A YEAR AGO THE CIA FIRST REPORTED THERE WERE UNUSUAL TROOP AND TANK MOVEMENTS IN THE COMMUNIST ZONE OF NORTH KOREA.

THERE WERE FRESH REPORTS OF TROOP AND TANK MOVEMENTS ABOUT THREE MONTHS AGO. AND THESE CONTINUED--WITH THE LAST REPORT BEING MADE ON JULY 9.

"IF I HAD RECEIVED SUCH REPORTS," ONE SENATOR SAID, "I CERTAINLY WOULD HAVE BEEN ALERTED TO THE DANGER."

VX527P 6/26

PA188

WASHINGTON--ADD KOREA-INTELLIGENCE (186)

HILLENKOETTER WAS REPORTED TO HAVE SAID THAT HIS AGENCY REPORTED TO ALL THE GOVERNMENT AGENCIES TO WHICH IT WAS SUPPOSED TO SUPPLY TOP-SECRET MILITARY INTELLIGENCE.

"HE SAID THAT THE CIA DIDN'T INTERPRET THIS INFORMATION," ONE SOURCE SAID, "BUT JUST REPORTED THE FACTS."

A REPORTER RAISED THE QUESTION OF WHO WAS SUPPOSED TO EVALUATE THE INTELLIGENCE THAT IS FUNNELLED THROUGH THE CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY.

"I DON'T KNOW," A LAWMAKER SAID. "THAT IS SOMETHING I'M GOING TO FIND OUT."

HE ADDED THAT HILLENKOETTER HAD NOT REPORTED AN ATTACK MIGHT BE LAUNCHED AT A CERTAIN PLACE OR AT A CERTAIN TIME--BUT HAD PASSED ON THE INTELLIGENCE REPORTS TO THE PROPER AGENCIES FOR THEM TO MAKE THEIR OWN EVALUATION.

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1/17/55

This excerpt is from the CIA Daily Summary of 11/2/50. At that time General Smith was DCI, but ORE was still in existence and producing the Daily Summary. The estimate of Chinese Communist intentions contained in this item of intelligence had been that to which CIA had been inclined for some time and continued to support until CC intervention had become an inescapable reality.

Although this is of general historical interest, it seems to me that the first paragraph might become the subject of a study of distinct political use in relation to DCID 4/8 (Comprehensive National Intelligence Estimates) para. II, (j): "Sino-Soviet relations, with particular reference to the degree of Soviet influence or control, the extent of Chinese Communist freedom of action...." If it could be established, in other words---as now seems not altogether

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improbable---that Wilkinson's xxx "statement of uncertain reliability" was what he was talking about, that the meetings he mentions actually did take place, and that they arrived at the decisions ascribed to them, xxx a valuable addition to our knowledge of Sino-Soviet relations might be made.

This, of course, may already have been done, but if it has not, it would seem to me worth trying in view of the importance of a knowledge of Sino-Soviet relations in the process of national estimating.

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